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colored. Some of the sets have one or two eggs with these small specks, and yet have one or two others that are very distinctly marked, for this species. One set has distinct spots of a delicate rosy pink tinge, another set has some of the eggs splotched rather than finely spotted or speckled, and these splotches are reddish in color.

Of forty-four sets of five eggs each, together with one of six eggs, fifteen of the sets were unmarked, nine contained one spotted egg, none had two eggs spotted, eight had three eggs, seven had four eggs, eight all five, while the six-egg set had all but one spotted. Some of these markings look like an incidental stain, as from wet grass or a fly speck, but the magnifying glass shows them to be natural coloration. The greatest number of spots or specks is usually at the larger end of the egg, and in some cases these are arranged somewhat as a ring. In other cases a spot or two on any part of an egg may be the only marking.

Both size and shape of the eggs of this species are very variable. The longest egg measured, in millimeters, 28.3 and the shortest 22.3, with an average of 24.6 for 115 eggs measured; while the width showed extremes of 18.8 and 15.9, with an average of 17.5. There is no particular correlation between the two diameters, however. For example, the longest egg measures  $28.3 \times 17.0$ , while the third shortest in the lot is  $22.8 \times 18.2$ , the one long and slim and the other short and fat.

The measurements of the sets used in figure 33, from left to right are as follows:

(C. A. S. No. 1743)  $28.3 \times 17.0$ ,  $27.2 \times 17.2$ ,  $26.4 \times 17.3$ ,  $24.8 \times 17.6$ ,  $24.1 \times 17.2$ .

(C. A. S. No. 1677)  $23.5 \times 17.5$ ,  $23.0 \times 18.4$ ,  $22.8 \times 17.7$ ,  $22.9 \times 17.7$ ,  $23.4 \times 17.8$ .

(C. A. S. No. 3660)  $26.1 \times 17.4$ ,  $25.4 \times 18.8$ ,  $25.0 \times 17.9$ ,  $24.6 \times 18.3$ ,  $25.1 \times 17.3$ .

(C. A. S. No. 3539)  $26.3 \times 17.0$ ,  $24.9 \times 18.5$ ,  $24.5 \times 18.2$ ,  $23.2 \times 18.5$ ,  $25.4 \times 18.0$ .

Average length of the 115 eggs measured is 24.6, and average width is 17.7.

Set nearest to average of the 23 that were measured:

(C. A. S. No. 3543)  $24.8 \times 18.2$ ,  $24.3 \times 17.7$ ,  $24.5 \times 17.9$ ,  $24.8 \times 17.7$ ,  $23.8 \times 17.5$ .

The tint of the white of these blown eggs varies somewhat, as before remarked, but not through any great range. Newly laid eggs seem to vary from bluish white, through pure white to slight cream color, while those that have been more or less incubated are apt to become yet a little darker cream color. Possibly some sets have been exposed to an occasional wetting, when not well protected, or the parent may have come on the nest with some of its feathers dampened by rain, but on the whole there is great freedom from stain.

*San Francisco, March 23, 1922.*

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Yellow-headed Blackbird in Company with Brewer Blackbirds.**—In volume xxii of THE CONDOR, page 205, Mr. Frank N. Bassett records the unusual occurrence of a Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) flocking with Brewer Blackbirds. Another instance of this was noted at Penticton, British Columbia, on October 19, 1921, when a single male was seen in the midst of a flock of about fifty Brewer Blackbirds. This was of interest to me not only for the unusual association of the two species, but on account of the scarcity of the Yellow-headed Blackbird in that locality and the late date on which it was seen. Another point of interest lay in the uncon-

ventional surroundings. One associates this species with tule marshes, or grain fields, and this bird seemed oddly out of place picking up refuse grain on a suburban street.—J. A. MUNRO, *Okanagan Landing, British Columbia, November 26, 1921.*

**The Occurrence of the Desert Horned Lark in Southern California.**—A careful analysis of the mixed flocks of horned larks that range the deserts and lowlands of California in such abundance during the winter has brought to light certain interesting facts and record stations for *Otocoris alpestris leucolaema*. The winter range of this form is given in both the third edition of the A. O. U. *Check-list*, and also by Oberholser in his review of the genus (Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., vol. 24, 1902, p. 821) as "south to . . . southeastern California". But the most southern record station actually given by the latter authority is Keeler, Inyo County, California, in a section perhaps better referred to as east-central California, because of the transverse ranges that divide the state south of that point.

The specimens listed below from the A. B. Howell and D. R. Dickey collections indicate a far more general distribution of the species throughout the southern portion of the state, in fall, winter, and spring, than had heretofore been suspected. Only the sea-coast proper seems to escape their invasion. The Fort Yuma birds have been previously referred to (Condor, xvii, 1915, p. 233), but we trust we may be pardoned for repeating the record here with a view to incorporating all available pertinent data. A list of record stations follows.

Inyo County: Deep Spring Valley, 2 specimens, Sept. 20, and Sept. 26, 1921; Keeler, 1 specimen, Oct. 21, 1921.

Kern County: Buena Vista Lake, 1 specimen, Sept. 16, 1921.

San Bernardino County: Victorville, 4 specimens, Sept. 25, 1921; Newberry Spring, 1 specimen\*, Dec. 8, 1917.

Los Angeles County: Palmdale, several specimens, Jan. 5, 1921.

Riverside County: 10 miles south of Ontario, several specimens, Dec. 3, 1919, and Dec. 11, 1920; Thermal, 1 specimen\*, Jan. 27, 1918.

Imperial County: 10 miles west of Kane Spring, 1 specimen, Oct. 15, 1921; vicinity of Fort Yuma, 3 specimens\*, Jan. 28, 1913, and Jan. 29, 1921; sand dunes east of Holtville, 1 specimen, March 21, 1916.

We are indebted to Mr. A. B. Howell for kindly allowing us to put on record the birds in his collection, which are starred in the above list, and to Dr. H. C. Oberholser for verifying the determinations of several of the more doubtful birds.—D. R. DICKEY AND A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *Pasadena, California, January 13, 1922.*

**What Color are the Feet of the Western Gull?**—In the last volume (part 8) of Ridgway's *Birds of North and Middle America*, the color of the feet of the Western Gull is given as yellow in life. In Dr. Dwight's recent description (Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash., vol. 32, 1919, pp. 11-13) of the southern form of the Western Gull (*Larus occidentalis livens*) the color of the feet is given as "lemon yellow". This Dr. Dwight now regards as an error on the part of the collector of the type specimen. In the fourth edition of Ridgway's *Manual of North American Birds* the color of the feet is given as "flesh colored" (under description of *Larus fuscus*). This, I believe, is the invariable color in the adult.

What I want to know is: 1. Has any one seen a Western Gull with yellow feet? 2. If not, where did the mistake (if it is a mistake) originate? When I first travelled south along the Pacific Coast in 1911 I was under the impression that this gull had yellow feet, and was considerably surprised to find that among the hundreds of adults that I examined at close quarters in life nothing but flesh colored feet were in evidence. The full description of the soft parts as given by Ridgway in the *Birds of North and Middle America* (part 8, p. 610) is as follows: "Bill deep yellow, the mandible with a subterminal lateral spot of red; iris brown; bare orbital ring vermilion red; legs and feet yellow (in life)." Three spring adults collected by myself vary from this in every item except the color of the bill. They all agree in having the iris pale yellow or straw color, freckled with grayish; eyelid deep yellow, no trace of red; feet flesh colored; and claws dark brown. Can California observers supply data to settle this question?

This gull also seems to be unfortunate in the records of its occurrence, distribution, and nesting. The latest A. O. U. *Check-list* gives the correct distribution with the exception of the Colorado record, now known to be an error; but Ridgway has since then perpetuated the impossible record, first made by Fannin (*Check List of British Columbia Birds*, 1891, p. 4) of the breeding of *Larus occidentalis* in the Similkameen Valley, British Columbia—a locality which no gull would nest in, a narrow rocky gash in the mountains.

All Fannin's "*occidentalis*", so labeled by him on the bases of the stands of his mounted birds, were simply *Larus argentatus*. This, in all the harbors of British Columbia, being the next commonest gull to *Larus glaucescens*, he assumed it was the Western Gull—the common gull of the west. Many other observers seem to have made a similar mistake. They took the presence of the Western Gull for granted, a sort of ground pattern on which to work in the records of the other species. These last they identified; the "Western Gull" was assumed. In all my coastal voyages on various craft extending back for about thirty-five years I have never seen the Western Gull north of Cape Flattery, not even among the flocks following the steamers on Puget Sound—and I have always been keenly on the lookout for it. Once you round Cape Flattery, it at once becomes the most conspicuous gull.

There are only three records for British Columbia, a molting adult taken by Spreadborough on the south end of Vancouver Island, and two taken at Comox on the eastern shore of that island. The latter are both adults, one being of the light mantled type and the other the dark type so common in California, "*Larus occidentalis livens*" of Dwight. The first of these gave me an idea as to how the "yellow" feet of the Western Gull may have originated. When I shot it I noted that the feet were rosy flesh color. As it lay on the thwart of the boat in front of me, one foot was elevated, the other hung down. As the blood drained from the tissues the color of the elevated foot turned from rosy flesh to yellowish white, not "yellow" by any means, but what might possibly have passed for cream color of a very pale shade, the other foot remaining as in life.

The correct record of the colors of all soft parts is of the prime importance in the Laridae, where so many closely allied species have feet of very different colors. The two black-backed gulls of western Europe, *Larus marinus* and *L. fuscus*, can readily be told apart in life by the feet alone, the former having them flesh colored and the latter yellow. The many false records for the Kittiwake on the Pacific Coast would never have been made if the color of the feet had been looked up.—ALLAN BROOKS, *Okanagan Landing, B. C., March 3, 1922.*

**Waterfowl Caught in Fish Nets.**—On February 28, 1922, while driving along the shores of Tillamook Bay, Oregon, with Deputy Game Warden Geo. Russell, an adult male White-winged Scoter (*Oidemia deglandi*) was seen struggling in a salmon net in which it had become entangled. The net was set in about five feet of water. On being questioned the fisherman told me that during the past fall he had caught several each of loons, scoters and wild ducks in his salmon nets.—STANLEY G. JEWETT, *Portland, Oregon, March 10, 1922.*

**Further Record of Savannah Sparrow in California\*.**—Mr. C. I. Clay, in *THE CONDOR*, vol. 19, 1917, p. 68, published a record of the occurrence in Humboldt County, of the Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis savanna*). This bird was identified by Dr. Joseph Grinnell of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, and constituted the first published record for the state.

During the field work of 1921 two sparrows were taken at Kneeland Prairie, Humboldt County, California, by Mr. Chester C. Lamb and myself, the identity of which I did not like to be too positive about without further professional opinion. These were submitted to the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, and pronounced by Mr. H. S. Swarth as being typical *Passerculus sandwichensis savanna* of southeastern Alaska. These two specimens were taken on September 29, 1921, in company with some of the Dwarf Marsh Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis brooksi* Bishop).

Two specimens of this genus were taken by Mr. C. Littlejohn and myself at Re-

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\*Contribution No. 135 from the California Academy of Sciences.

qua, May 4 and 5, 1921, which I have also placed with *savanna*. These two birds conform to this race in measurements, and in practically every way, except that the dark markings on the throat and breast are rather lighter than in the specimens I have had for comparison. These Requa birds were taken on the open hillside back of the town and were the only individuals of this genus we noted in that particular spot. The finding of these four examples of the race seems to indicate that the Savannah Sparrow is a more common winter migrant to the northwest coast of California than was heretofore supposed.—JOSEPH MAILLIARD, *San Francisco, California, February 8, 1922.*

**Crossbills Eating Aphis.**—Mr. Storer's note in the last May CONDOR (vol. 23, 1921, p. 98) regarding Crossbills eating aphis, recalls the fact that American Crossbills taken in Jasper Park, Alberta, the summer of 1917, had their faces and throats covered with bluish white bloom from woolly aphis apparently gleaned in the spruces. Last summer I had opportunity to watch a captive Crossbill in Manitoba. It was fed largely at the time on leaf galls from the poplars surrounding the house. The bird would open its bill and drive both points deeply into the soft mass of the gall until the mandibles were practically closed and crossed. Then, with a slight twist of the head, the gall would be split wide open. The hollow interior was seen to be filled with what appeared to be a sort of woolly aphis, which was rapidly cleaned out with the bird's tongue. The certainty, ease and rapidity with which the operation was performed indicated that the apparently awkwardly crossed bill was a most efficient implement for the work.—P. A. TAVERNER, *Victoria Memorial Museum, Ottawa, Canada, March 2, 1922.*

**Bird Records from California, Arizona, and Guadalupe Island.**—

*Phalacrocorax auritus albociliatus*. Farallon Cormorant. One specimen taken on a pond near Fort Lowell, Arizona, April 26, 1905.

*Rallus obsoletus*. California Clapper Rail. Several seen along the rocky shore at Pacific Grove, California, in October, 1916.

*Pisobia maculata*. Pectoral Sandpiper. A number observed near National City, California, the latter part of October, 1917.

*Lophodytes cucullatus*. Hooded Merganser. A male and two females observed on Smith River, near Adams, California, October 10, 1915.

*Oreortyx picta picta*. Mountain Quail. A small flock flushed near Adams, California, in October, 1915.

*Melopelia asiatica*. White-winged Dove. Three flushed from a camp site on the Pima Indian reservation, twelve miles south of Tucson, Arizona, March 20, 1918.

*Micropallas whitneyi*. Elf Owl. Two of these birds frequented an isolated cottonwood tree at Bard, Imperial County, California, in April, 1915, but on account of the density of the foliage I was unable to shoot them.

*Asyndesmus lewisi*. Lewis Woodpecker. Several noticed in large cottonwood trees at Bard, California, on April 30, 1915.

*Colaptes auratus luteus*. Northern Flicker. I have a male specimen taken at Eldridge, California, January 4, 1913.

*Aphelocoma californica californica*. California Jay. Not uncommon near Adams (seventeen miles east of Crescent City), California, during October and November, 1915.

*Molothrus ater obscurus*. Dwarf Cowbird. A female taken near Long Beach, California, June 6, 1913.

*Loxia curvirostra stricklandi*. Mexican Crossbill. A female that was taken in the Chiricahua Mountains, Arizona, would have commenced to incubate a set of eggs about August 28.

*Astragalinus tristis pallidus*. Pale Goldfinch. A few seen near Fort Lowell, Arizona, November 20, 1905, and one secured in Sabina Canyon, Catalina Mountains, December 10, 1920.

*Astragalinus lawrencei*. Lawrence Goldfinch. Specimens taken or seen at Fort Lowell, Arizona, in March, 1905; at Paradise, Arizona, in November, 1918; at Willcox, Arizona, March 17, 1919; at Santa Cruz, California, two pairs, on May 17, 1917.

*Zonotrichia albicollis*. White-throated Sparrow. I have a specimen I secured near the corral on the shore of Guadalupe Island, Mexico, on October 10, 1913; and also a male taken at Adams, California, November 4, 1915.

*Spizella monticola ochracea*. Western Tree Sparrow. A fine male specimen taken at Pacific Grove, California, October 13, 1916, is in my possession.

*Piranga ludoviciana*. Western Tanager. A male of the year which was feeding on madrone berries and with its plumage badly smeared with crude oil, was secured at Boulder Creek, California, October 20, 1916.

*Piranga rubra rubra*. Summer Tanager. I have a female which I secured in the cypress grove on the summit of Guadalupe Island, Mexico, on October 12, 1913.

*Guiraca caerulea lazula*. Western Blue Grosbeak. Two males observed feeding on wild oats near Mosquito Harbor, San Clemente Island, April 21, 1914.

*Dendroica townsendi*. Townsend Warbler. A male secured near the same place on April 18, 1914.

*Dendroica coronata*. Myrtle Warbler. A number observed near Adams, California, in November, 1915.

*Vermivora celata sordida*. Dusky Warbler. Seen in the willows on the beach at Monterey, California, in October, and at Pacific Grove, in November, 1916.

*Thryomanes bewicki drymoecus*. San Joaquin Wren. One specimen secured at Adams, California, November 1, 1915.

*Thryomanes bewicki marinensis*. Nicasio Wren. One specimen secured seven miles east of Crescent City, California, November 18, 1915.

*Riparia riparia*. Bank Swallow. A considerable colony of some kind of swallow, certainly not *Petrochelidon*, and apparently Bank Swallows, were present about an outlying rock at Alamos Landing, Santa Cruz Island, California, during June, 1914.

*Penthestes rufescens rufescens*. Chestnut-backed Chickadee. A family found in a burnt stub, eleven miles from McCloud, California, near the river of that name, on August 2, 1915.—H. H. KIMBALL, *Seal Beach, California, February 20, 1922*.

**Townsend Solitaire on the Oregon Coast.**—On February 28, 1922, a single Townsend Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*) was seen along the roadside near the mouth of the Miami River, Tillamook County, Oregon. This is the first record of the Solitaire in this county, and so far as I can learn the first west of the coast mountains in northwestern Oregon. It breeds commonly in the Transition zone in the Blue Mountains of eastern Oregon, and sparingly west to the west slope of the Cascades in central and northern Oregon, migrating into the Willamette Valley sparingly during the winter.—STANLEY G. JEWETT, *Portland, Oregon, March 10, 1922*.

**A Winter Record of the Texas Nighthawk in California.**—At first thought, one would hardly expect a goatsucker to tolerate more than a touch of frost, but, indeed, there is no apparent reason why a bird of this sort should not be able to gain a living wherever and whenever a Vermilion Flycatcher can. However that may be, shortly after sundown on January 23, 1922, three miles northwest of Calexico, Imperial County, California, a Texas Nighthawk (*Chordeiles acutipennis texensis*) flew a few yards above me and hawked back and forth several times above a field of lettuce. This could hardly have been a migrating bird, and its presence was all the more unusual for the fact that the given date was in the midst of the coldest weather experienced by southern California during nine years, with a third of an inch of ice at night. It is a question whether frosts are not just as frequent and as severe in the Imperial Valley as they are throughout the general area known as the "thermal belt" of the San Diegan faunal division. However, the mean winter temperature is considerably higher in the former section, due to much warmer days, and as there are probably few birds found north of the Mexican border which cannot put up with an occasional frosty night, one would expect to find more of the "tender" species lingering through the winter in the Valley than in the relatively cooler districts nearer the coast.

In the same locality on January 22, 1922, I flushed two flickers from a cottonwood by the roadside. One was the usual *Colaptes cafer collaris*, but the other was a yellow-shafted bird, and appeared to be somewhat smaller. It was impossible to tell whether this individual was a *Colaptes chrysoides mearnsi*, or merely one of those puzzlers which are variously placed as *Colaptes auratus borealis*, or as chromatic variants of *collaris*. During the breeding season, Mearns Gilded Flicker is seldom found far from the sahuaros, but in winter it scatters more widely, and for some years I have

rather expected to hear of its presence in the Imperial Valley, in common with a number of other birds which are extending their ranges over the irrigated delta of the Colorado River. Taken in this connection only, this note may prove of interest.—A. BRAZIER HOWELL, *Pasadena, California, February 8, 1922.*

**Some Winter Birds of the Colorado Delta.**—On January 22 and 23 of this year I was with a party hunting quail near Don Lorenzo in Lower California. We were from forty to fifty miles east of Calexico, and from twelve to sixteen miles south of the international line.

North of us we could see the sand hills that are still untamed if not unconquered, and beyond them the well-known mountain ranges of the desert. But we were not in a desert country at all—rather in a jungle. The true delta of the Colorado is overflow land, thickly covered with vegetation; ink-weed, rag-weed, and arrow-weed are the native names of the most common kinds. A few cotton-woods and many willows in the lower places, and the ever present mesquite patches, broke the monotony. The ground is not really level. Wind and water have combined to produce hills and depressions, and open places where sand was master were by no means rare. Still, in a general sense, we were on the edge of a flat scrubby country of several thousand square miles, covered solidly with a head-high growth that could be penetrated only with difficulty.

There was hardly a time when one or more of the Raptores were not in sight. When I woke the first morning a pair of Marsh Hawks were busily harrying the cotton-fields by the ranch house. Our old friend, the Western Red-tail, was conspicuously present, as were several other species of hawks and at least two species of owls besides the Burrowing Owl. Turkey Vultures were common. All of which speaks volumes for the abundance of the unseen rodent life in the brush.

The White-crowned Sparrow, in my judgment, was the most common bird, and Gambel Quail the next. Abert Towhees were seen everywhere, and the Mexican Ground Dove and the Northern Cactus Wren were very abundant, though both were outnumbered by the Western Mourning Dove. The Black Phoebe was as busy as anywhere around ponds and buildings. Ravens were plentiful, especially along the banks of the Bee River. I collected three Sparrow Hawks for the San Diego Museum.

Among other land birds observed were Shrike, Thrush, Bush-tit, Vermilion Flycatcher, Dwarf Cowbird (quite common), Road-runner, Phainopepla, Tree Swallow, and Sonora Red-wing.

On January 24 we drove back to Hecheira and then turned south. We found a slough within eight or ten miles on which we shot ducks, mostly Spoonbills. My son and I each killed one of a pair of Fulvous Tree Ducks, and were much surprised to find them so far north at this season. There was a heavy tule growth around the slough, which was the home of innumerable marsh wrens, and the Sora was more common than I have ever seen it elsewhere.

We drove on to Volcano Lake and spent one morning there. Ruddies and Spoonbills were the most common ducks. Avocets, too, were present in large numbers. I was interested in obtaining from Mr. W. G. Hendricks an authentic statement of the presence there of the Roseate Spoonbill. In the summer of 1920 a flock of about twenty were on the lake, and in the summer of 1921 four were observed. A flight of Lesser Snow Geese apparently takes place over this lake every winter.—GRIFFING BANCROFT, *San Diego, California, February 1, 1922.*

**Water Ouzel Eating a Fish.**—On January 1, 1922, I caught sight of a small, plump bird struggling with something on a snow bank across the river, a foot or so from the water's edge. The bird was recognized at once as an Ouzel (*Cinclus mexicanus unicolor*). It appeared to have a small fish in its beak, which it was shaking violently and beating in the snow. I went to the tent and got the field glasses and was able to determine that it really was a fish that the Ouzel was struggling with. The fish was about two inches long and very much alive. After beating and mauling the fish for a few moments the Ouzel would attempt to swallow it. At this juncture the fish would free itself and flop onto the snow, whereupon the Ouzel would seize it and the maltreatment would commence again. After tussling with the refractory fish for about five minutes the Ouzel with apparently tremendous effort managed to stuff the victim down. After the

final effort the Ouzel appeared stunned and dazed and too full to move. His inactivity, however, was very brief and he soon plunged into the turbulent river. His strange maneuvers with the fish might remind one of the antics of the Kingfisher when attempting to reduce his catch to an edible state.—CHAS. W. MICHAEL, *Yosemite, California, January 31, 1922.*

**Turkey Vulture Wintering at Chico, Butte County, California.**—On December 28, 1921, while riding through the Phelan Ranch near Chico, California, I saw a Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura septentrionalis*) circling overhead. On expressing my surprise at seeing the bird so far north at that time of year my companion, who is an old resident there, informed me that they wintered there "quite commonly". Later in the day another was seen in the same locality. Two days later, December 30, I saw two of the birds along the highway between Chico and Gridley, which seems to substantiate my companion's remark.—FRANK N. BASSETT, *Alameda, California, February 18, 1922.*

**Behavior of a Barn Owl in Captivity.**—On February 13, 1922, some boys captured alive a Barn Owl (*Aluco pratincola*), in the top of the high school building in Benicia. After passing through several different hands it was finally presented to me on the evening of the same day, and I promptly made from a box a good-sized cage for it with the intention of learning a little about the bird's habits.

As usual with owls this bird's activity was much restricted during the day. Especially on sunny days, or at night when brought into a room where there was an electric light, the bird became very drowsy and to all appearances was fast asleep. It would either stand listlessly or lie forward on its breast, as when incubating, with eyes closed and in a position to avoid the most light. Should someone approach the cage during the day after the bird had been left alone for some time, it would always arouse itself sufficiently to attempt to avoid capture, but, not succeeding, would soon settle down and doze off again and become indifferent to any amount of commotion. In fact, it could be taken from its cage, laid on its back, feet upwards, and in this position would remain motionless, its eyes closed, wings folded and claws drawn tightly together.

Towards evening and at night, and sometimes on cloudy days, it became more lively and would attempt to escape from its cage, several times succeeding. Then he had the larger liberty of the laundry, where his cage was kept; an open window covered by a wire screen kept him from getting out of doors. In the laundry he perched on one of the shelves or on a clothes-line, or else flew back and forth between the perches or towards the window, where he clutched the wire screen with his claws, held on awhile, and then flew back to a perch. When recapturing him I found it advisable to keep my hands away from his claws, as I at first got several bad scratches. If he succeeded in getting a good hold of my hand it was difficult to extract it, as he did not seem satisfied to puncture the flesh by only one tight grasp, but would loosen and tighten his grip intermittently, thus making various wounds. He never bit me, though he held his mandibles open when I was recapturing him as though threatening to seize my fingers.

One evening I brought the cage into the kitchen and placed it on the floor to observe the bird's actions. He was quiet and indifferent until a house cat came in through the back door. This immediately occasioned a display of vigorous activity on the part of the owl. As soon as he spied the cat he began snapping his bill, and let forth a series of long, shrill screams of some five seconds duration, with an intermission between each of about the same length. This was kept up for about half an hour, or until the cat left the room. During all this time, backed into one corner of the box, he kept his wings raised high above his head, his whole body swaying slowly from side to side, and eyes open to their full extent, following the cat as it moved about the room.

Much to my disappointment I had difficulty in feeding him. I placed sparrows, raw beef, liver and mice in his cage but he would not voluntarily eat any of these. I succeeded in forcing two house mice into his throat, the bones and fur of which he later expelled in pellets. He accepted a little raw beef which was also forcibly fed to him; liver he would not retain but promptly expelled it. His attitude towards food was one of indifference; he made no effort to avoid being fed and no effort to feed himself. A sparrow which I skinned and fed to him he kept down, but several others freshly killed and placed in his box he did not touch. I thought he would soon begin to eat of his own

accord, but much to my surprise and regret on the morning of the 20th, just a week after his capture, I found him dead in the bottom of his cage.

I am recording these notes in the belief that some observer who has had the opportunity of studying the Barn Owl in captivity would be interested in my experience with this individual. I have had Screech and Burrowing Owls in my possession for several days, but they all ate eagerly and voluntarily the food given them, and when released were in fine physical condition. I am wondering if the bird's behavior as reported above, especially as regards difficulty in feeding, was peculiar to this individual or characteristic of the species when kept in confinement.—EMERSON A. STONER, *Benicia, California, March 1, 1922.*

**Bird Drives in the Yukon Delta.**—In the spring of 1913, in company with Claud J. Roach, I made a trip by dog team from Bristol Bay, Alaska, to the Yukon River and back by way of the Kuskokwim River. The journey was made primarily to make certain investigations of the fur-bearing animals of the region for the United States Bureau of Fisheries, but an opportunity was afforded to make observations on other forms of life as well. Bethel, a town near the head of tidewater on the Kuskokwim, was made our headquarters for nearly two months. While there, we were greatly impressed by the vivid accounts we heard of the great bird drives which are held annually out on the Yukon delta. The stories came from so many sources, apparently reliable, and all so agreed in the essential details, that there seemed to be little doubt of the accuracy of the main features. Nevertheless, the drives seemed to be so unique that I had hoped to be able to check the statements by personal observation before making any report of them. But the likelihood of my being able again to visit the region is growing more and more remote, so it seems best to call the attention of others to the matter. Perhaps someone may be able to visit the place at the proper time to witness one of these events. Therefore, the account is repeated as it was given to us by numerous residents. I cannot, of course, vouch for the accuracy of the statements, but those who gave the information seemed entirely reliable.

The drives take place in the salt lagoons in the region south of Nelson Island. Apparently the borders of these are great breeding grounds for ducks and geese, and in August each year the young birds, almost grown but unable to fly, gather in large flocks in the quiet waters to await the maturing of the plumage before the southward flight. Their numbers are greatly increased by the adult birds, which at this season lose their wing feathers and are unable to fly. The cast-off feathers are so abundant that they form windrows on the shore lines.

The drive is made by the natives in their kyaks. Fifteen to twenty of these skin boats take part, one man to each. They beat the grassy banks and the water with their paddles and gradually drive the birds by thousands into some pocket or head where they are killed with sticks and spears with a great hurrah and much excitement. One drive in 1912 was said to have resulted in the capture of fourteen boat loads. Just how many birds this would represent is difficult to determine, but it would certainly be more than a thousand. I have seen a native take his wife, three children and several dogs, as well as his camp outfit, from beneath the hatch of one of these boats, and an estimate might roughly be made from this of the number of birds taken.

Some persons might be inclined to criticise the native for such wholesale slaughter, but they are advised to await an impartial investigation before doing so. Perhaps the people are entitled to them. The country is bleak and inhospitable; so much so that white men can scarcely get there at all. The inhabitants live much of the time upon raw food, chiefly the black fish of the interior delta lakes. Away from the coast they have no fuel whatsoever except a little seal oil which they take for their lamps. Yet they seem to be the healthiest, happiest, albeit the dirtiest, of all Alaska natives.—G. DALLAS HANNA, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, March 23, 1922.*

**Black and White Warbler in Southern California.**—I note that in THE CONDOR of September, 1921, in the Field and Study department, the "sixth occurrence of the Black and White Warbler" in California is recorded. It may be of interest to CONDOR readers to know that I saw a Black and White Warbler on the trunk of an old olive tree about fifteen feet from my window on October 14, 1908. Being an amateur at bird study I

did not, at the time, know the rarity of the object of my vision. However, there is no question in my mind as to its identity. It crept up and around the trunk of one tree and then did the same on another tree, in full view from the window.—Mrs. T. F. JOHNSON, *National City, California, March 27, 1922.*

**Ring-necked Ducks in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, California\*.**—On the morning of March 6, 1922, Mr. C. R. Thomas, of the Audubon Association of the Pacific, kindly telephoned to Dr. Barton Warren Evermann, of the California Academy of Sciences, that he had the day before seen some Ring-necked Ducks (*Marila collaris*) on one of the Chain of Lakes in Golden Gate Park. Acting upon this information, Dr. Evermann and I repaired to the scene and found the ducks still there. We found Mr. A. S. Kibbe, president of the Audubon Association, also on the ground for the same purpose as ourselves. At the time of this visit the ducks were asleep on the water with their heads laid on their backs, and, as the light was not good, it was difficult to distinguish the female of this species from the Ruddy Duck (*Erismatura jamaicensis*).

As the light was better in the afternoon I took Mr. Chase Littlejohn with me and found matters much improved on the lake. The light was just right and the birds were moving around. As a result of this we succeeded in counting seven males and twenty females in the flock. On this occasion we met Mrs. Jane Schlesinger close to the lake and had the pleasure of showing the ducks to her. Mr. Littlejohn states that this species of duck used to be quite common on the southern part of San Francisco Bay, and that he had seen many flocks of them, as well as many of the birds brought in to Redwood City by hunters. But this was the first time I, myself, had ever had the opportunity to see a flock of these ducks. Mr. Kibbe has already made a brief report of the event in the *Gull* (vol. 4, no. 3), but it seemed of sufficient importance to warrant enlarging upon and presenting to the readers of the CONDOR.—JOSEPH MAILLIARD, *San Francisco, March 23, 1922.*

**Field Notes from Riverside and Imperial Counties, California.**—On March 27, 1922, I took a nest with one egg of the Mexican Ground Dove (*Chaemepelia passerina pallens*) at Winterhaven, Imperial County, across the Colorado River from Yuma, Arizona. The female was incubating. I had been observing the pair for some moments. When first seen they were perched side by side on a slender branch near the nest. They then flew to the ground and copulated. The nest was in a slender willow on the edge of an irrigation ditch, about eight feet from the ground, wedged between the main trunk and one slender branch. I saw two other pairs of Ground Doves in the same general region, one of which was evidently also nesting, as the female returned persistently to the same clump of bushes.

The only other published record of the nesting of this species in California of which I am aware is that of Leo Wiley for Palo Verde, Imperial County (Condor, vol. 18, 1916, p. 230). The time of nesting is not mentioned in his note. Gilman (Condor, vol. 13, 1911, p. 54) says that the earliest nest found at Pima, Arizona, was on July 7.

Lark Buntings (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) were seen in small flocks at four different points between Banning and Yuma, feeding in washes or in open fields. One flock of about thirty birds was noted at the head of San Gorgonio Pass about a mile below Banning. On January 3, 1922, a flock of about twenty was noted at Thermal.

About a mile below Banning the last Cactus Woodpecker (*Dryobates scalaris cacophilus*) was noted. A single Lesser Yellow-legs (*Totanus flavipes*) was seen near Brawley on March 28, feeding with a flock of about twenty Greater Yellow-legs.—RALPH HOFFMANN, *Carpinteria, California, April 4, 1922.*

**Some Water Birds Seen in San Gorgonio Pass.**—Several species are seen regularly passing overhead during the migrations. Large flocks of White Pelicans (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) go over in spring and fall. They usually fly at a great height, in V-shaped flocks, occasionally circling about for a while before going on. Wild Geese of several species appear in the spring, and Cranes (*Grus canadensis* or *G. mexicana*) go over occasionally.

The reservoir at Banning attracts many water birds. Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus albocollatus*) are frequently seen there, and Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and

\*Contribution No. 147 from the California Academy of Sciences.

other ducks drop in from time to time. Of rarer species I have seen one Black Tern (*Hydrochelidon nigra surinamensis*), a young bird in first year plumage, the Wilson Phalarope (*Steganopus tricolor*) and Northern Phalarope (*Lobipes lobatus*), and one Least Sandpiper (*Pisobia minutilla*). The Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*) is often seen about the edge of the reservoir. The Killdeer (*Oxyechus vociferus*) is common in the ploughed fields. I have seen both the Anthony Green Heron (*Butorides virescens anthonyi*) and the Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax naevius*) hereabouts.—R. A. BRAMKAMP, Banning, California, December 21, 1921.

## EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

Many years ago one of our foremost ornithologists claimed a certain species of bird as "his own", because, while it had been named by another man, he, himself, was first able to give a satisfactory description of the species. We can smile at the "claim", perhaps; today we disallow it. Of the valid credit he acquired by information given out regarding this species and many others, there is no question. The incident seems amusing now, in the general acceptance of uniform nomenclatural rules, but the lesson conveyed may still be read. To claim "credit" or "priority" will not secure it; it comes unsought if it is deserved. It is a matter of congratulation that ornithology today is practically free from bickering and jealousy between individuals, and that as a rule a spirit of mutual helpfulness prevails.

An immensely useful feature of our contemporary magazine *Bird-Lore* is the School Department which is conducted under the auspices of the National Association of Audubon Societies. Dr. Arthur A. Allen of Cornell University is editor of this department. As is to be expected under Dr. Allen's editorship, the material presented is well chosen, rigidly authentic, and couched in sober language. The educational function of the Audubon Societies, thus performed, is an exceedingly worthy one.

In *The Ibis* for April, 1922, Mr. J. H. Gurney writes "on the sense of smell possessed by birds", an article that is well worth reading. Details of observations made far and wide, on various species of birds, by many different people, are brought together, as well as arguments, for and against, in the disputed question of whether or not the sense of smell is used by birds in their search for food, or for other ends. While it is well for any ornithologist to have a grasp of what has been done in this field, still an elaborate resume of opinions and controversies (perhaps the major part of the literature on this subject) together with such obviously inadequate, frequently accidental, "experiments" as compose most of the recorded observations, should be no more than a preliminary to studies of a more conclusive nature.

Here, again, is a field for those who, disliking to kill birds, still wish to make some substantial contribution to ornithology. To carry on the discussion on the basis of the disputed observations so far placed on record, is to put ornithologists in the same class as certain clerical disputants of the Middle Ages, whose serious activities are now an unailing subject of humor, discussing heatedly, for example, the number of legs possessed by a fly, without descending to the vulgar expedient of counting them. To carry on a series of experiments here in California, and experiments that should be conclusive, would seem to be a simple matter for anyone with a little time to devote to the subject. The Turkey Vulture, an obvious subject for such experimentation, is abundant throughout most of California. It would take but little ingenuity to devise and carry out a series of observations upon the habits of this species, based perhaps upon baits, concealed and otherwise, the results of which would explain at least the method by which this bird discovers its food. Furthermore, such experiments could be conducted without offending even the most rabid bird protectionist or anti-animal-experimentalist—without the need even of such official permits as are called for in the banding of birds.

The ornithologists of Washington, D. C., met at the home of Mr. B. H. Swales, 2921 Albemarle St., Chevy Chase, D. C., on March 14, 1922, and organized an ornithological club to be known as the Baird Club, in honor of Prof. Spencer F. Baird. Dr. A. K. Fisher was elected President, Mr. Robert Ridgway, Honorary President, Mr. Ned Hollister, Vice President, and Mr. B. H. Swales, Secretary. The membership of the club is restricted to those primarily interested in birds. Meetings will be held monthly at the members' homes, for more or less informal social intercourse.

The Cooper Prize in Ornithology (\$50.00), offered at the University of California for the best essay on any topic concerned with birds, has been won by Mr. Robert C. Miller. His thesis, "A Study of the Flight of Sea Gulls", was unanimously chosen by the